

**Maine Maritime Museum Library
243 Washington Street
Bath, Maine 04530-1638
(207) 443-1316, ext. 328, 336**



**Inventory
for
Manuscript Collection
MS-430**

**Warren Sawyer Papers
(*Shipbuilder of Milbridge, Maine*)
Inclusive dates: 1892-1925**

**by
Anastasia S. Weigle**
Edited by Nathan R. Lipfert

April 2009

**Shelf feet: .5
Number of boxes: 1**
Accession # 2006.087.01

A PART OF THE CAPTAIN W. J. LEWIS PARKER BEQUEST

COPYRIGHT RESTRICTION

The material described herein is the physical property of the Maine Maritime Museum Library. **Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or the various items, or to their legal representatives, or to Maine Maritime Museum.** For further information, consult the library staff.

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be *“used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship or research.”* If a user later uses a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if fulfillment of the order is judged to be in violation of copyright law.

It is the user’s responsibility to understand the copyright law concerning the use of the historical documents contained in this library.

Copyright © 2009 by the Maine Maritime Museum

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Maine Maritime Museum Library.

ABSTRACT

Sawyer, Warren, *Captain* (1849 - 1914)

Papers, 1892-1925

1 box (.5 shelf feet)

Shipbuilder, master mariner and ship owner of Milbridge (ME).

Two letter copy books and two dividend account books belonging to Warren Sawyer, and a few loose papers relating to vessel ownership. All relate to the Sawyer shipyards and shipping businesses in Milbridge (ME).

Bequeathed by Capt. William J. L. Parker in 2006.

MS-430, accession #2006.087.01

Finding aid in repository; folder level control.

Added entries—persons:

Sawyer, Alonzo (b. 1864, d. ?)

Sawyer, Elmer E. (b. 1863, d. 1917)

Sawyer, Joseph Warren (b. 1818, d. 1898)

Sawyer, Joseph Warren, II (b. 1878, d. ?)

Sawyer, Warren (b. 1849, d. 1914)

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels)

J. W. Sawyer & Sons

Warren Sawyer Co.

Sawyer Bros.

Added entries—key terms:

Milbridge (ME)

Shipbuilders

Shipbuilding—Milbridge (ME)

Shipyards—Milbridge (ME)

Ships

Schooners

ACQUISITION

This collection was bequeathed to Maine Maritime Museum from the estate of Capt. William J. L. Parker in November and December 2006.

PROVENANCE

There is no documentation in Capt. Parker's papers that would indicate how or where he acquired this collection.

RESTRICTIONS

There are no restrictions on the study or use of these materials.

PHYSICAL CONDITION

The account books are intact with secure binds.. Other than minor shelf wear, the account books are in very good condition. The letter copy books are in good condition. One book is bound tissue paper while the second is very fine Japanese Hand Made papers. Both have either some tears and creases (pages 28 and 305 of Warren's letter copy book 1900-1913 have been torn out.) Iron gall ink has faded on a number of pages or has eaten through the tissue paper. These pages, when turned, should be handled with extreme care.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Warren Sawyer. Warren Sawyer was the eldest child of Joseph Warren Sawyer and Mary Jane (Wallace) Sawyer, born in Milbridge, Washington County, Maine, in 1849. He went to sea, and at the age of 20 had command of the Bath-built three-mast schooner *Warren Sawyer*. In 1872 he became the commander and part owner of the 5-year-old Milbridge schooner *Mahaska*, which his father and uncle had had shares in from her launching. In 1876 he took the new Milbridge bark *Illie*, and in 1885 the new Milbridge bark *Ventura*. He later commanded the 1897 Milbridge three-mast schooner *Nokomis*, built by his brothers.

In 1876 he married Mary L. Knowles, and they lived in Milbridge. When the census taker visited the house in 1880, Warren Sawyer got recorded as "Master Mariner – at sea." He was still listed as commanding *Nokomis* in 1899, but by the 1900 census his occupation was given as ship builder. Although nominally a partner with his father and brothers in the family shipyard from 1888, he likely was less directly involved in the yard, spending a good deal of his time at sea.

Warren Sawyer is the builder of record for the four-mast schooner *Myrtle Tunnel*, launched in 1904. There were other schooners built in Milbridge that carried the Tunnel name, but all were built by Sawyer Brothers. Every other vessel built in Milbridge from 1899 until Warren's death was recorded as built by Sawyer Brothers or a non-Sawyer builder. The *Myrtle Tunnel* may be the only vessel built by Warren alone.

The 1910 census gives his occupation as "Saw Mill", but when he died of pneumonia on 19 April 1914, aged 64, he was called a ship builder.

HISTORICAL NOTES

Sawyer Brothers — Ship Builders in Milbridge, Maine. Joseph W. Sawyer, with his brother William R., founded a Milbridge shipyard around 1858, or perhaps 1865. The J. W. Sawyer yard was located on the Narraguagus River, half way between the villages of Cherryfield and Milbridge. At that time, there were three yards in Milbridge; the Sawyer yard, the Ezekiel Dyer yard and the yard of Amos Dyer.

The family tradition was that the first vessel built was a bark named **Free Trade**. Ship registers indicate that she was built in 1865, so the shipyard may not have been established until then. She was burned the same year, reputedly as a result of the Civil War, but was soon rebuilt. They built the bark **Illie** in 1876, and the following year they built the largest vessel launched in Milbridge up to that time: the 977-ton bark **Vilora H. Hopkins**.

Joseph W. Sawyer built vessels alone from 1875-1888. His three sons, Warren, Elmer and Alonzo came on board in 1888, calling the yard J. W. Sawyer & Sons. Joseph W. retired from the year in 1897. The firm was then called Sawyer Brothers. Alonzo, Elmer and Warren continued the yard. Alonzo later said that Sawyer Brothers built 35 vessels. Warren started another yard in the early 1900s, Warren Sawyer & Co., in which he built at least the four-mast schooner **Myrtle Tunnel**, in 1904. Warren also owned a saw mill where the bulk of his mill work was in connection with his shipbuilding business.

The three-mast schooner, **Grand Turk**, was the last ship built by Sawyer Brothers (1916), after which time the yard was leased to the Sawyer Shipbuilding Corporation. The **Grand Turk** was constructed for Roger & Webb of Boston for West Indies Trade. In 1919 the last large vessel was built in the town of Milbridge.

Sawyer-built vessels were reputedly as well-known in Hong Kong, Sidney, Cape Town and Buenos Aires as they were in Boston, New York or San Francisco. The yard's vessels were sturdy with sound hulls and trim lines.. They were built of oak, spruce, and cedar cut from the forests near Milbridge. All were barks, schooners, or brigs; no full-rigged ships were built in Milbridge at all. The Sawyer yards provided steady employment for carpenters, smiths, caulkers and riggers from Milbridge and nearby Harrington and Columbia Falls.

Warren's son, Joseph "Joe" Warren Sawyer II was born in Addison, Maine, September 29, 1878, but soon afterward his parents moved to Milbridge, and there he attended public school. Later he was a student at Kent's Hill Preparatory School and Hebron Academy, going thence to the law department of the University of Maine,

receiving his degree, LL.B., at graduation, class of 1910. He then returned to Milbridge, and became involved in his father shipbuilding firm.

In 1937 Roger Sawyer, son of Alonzo and grandson of Joseph W. Sawyer, confident that shipbuilding was returning to the Maine coast, reopened the Sawyer yard where he began building motor boats, yachts, and the pinky **Glad Tidings**, built for Howard I. Chapelle, noted naval architect and maritime historian.

Sources: The Milbridge Register 1905, Compiled by Mitchell S. Campbell, Brunswick, Maine. Published by the H. E. Mitchell Co. 1905; *Merchant Sail*, by William Armstrong Fairburn, Center Lovell (ME): Fairburn Marine Educational Foundation, Inc., 1945-1955

Milbridge Historical Society, Vol. 12 No. 1 Spring 2008

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTES

This collection consists of four books—two letter copy books and two account books listing dividends belonging to Warren Sawyer. Warren's first letter copy book is identified as "Private Book" on the cover and is dated 1892 to 1913. Warren Sawyer was Treasurer of the Milbridge Water Company as is indicated at the closing of his letters and his letters pertain to both personal and business matters. There are references to a settlement with G. A. Sawyer on the purchase of waterworks (pg. 20) and purchasing valves, pumps, fittings and pipes to build a new water works system in which Warren Sawyer supplied water to the town of Milbridge. Some notes of interest:

- Letters to a brother Philander (pp. 7, 80)
- Insurance for the **Nokomis** (pg. 38)
- between the Town of Milbridge and the Milbridge Water Co (pg. 43)
- settling is father's estate, J. W. Sawyer after his death in 1898 (pp. 52, 60-62, 66, 70)
- dealing with his son Joseph W. accounts (pg. 54)
- advising Capt. John E. Mitchell on changing a vessel back to American registry (pg. 57-58)
- references to the bark **Auburndale** (pg. 60)
- Land deed between J. W. Sawyer and E. L. Young (pg. 65)
- Contract for Schooner **John Maxwell** (pg. 67)
- Purchasing School Furniture (pg. 85)

The second letter copy book also belongs to Warren Sawyer and this book relates to his own shipbuilding enterprise, Warren Sawyer & Co. He alludes to this in two letters. One on page 13 written to Lebanon Chain Works stating, "*I was senior member of the firm of Sawyer Brothers, but am now building on my own account.*" and on page 98 where he says, "*I was formerly in the firm of Sawyer Bros. I left my brothers last Oct. and have started to go it alone in this business.*" He does reference his brothers' yard (Sawyer Brothers) a number of times. Most correspondence deals with purchasing materials to build his ships, writing to freight agents or providing vessels to others. I have included an index for this book of letters as part of the finding aids.

Neither of the letter copy books have their internal index filled out.

The two account books deal with dividends and vessels Warren Sawyer had a financial interest in. We have included an index of vessel names as part of the finding aids. Inside the second account book were loose papers belonging to the Sawyer Bros. (Alonzo and Elmer). Since one of the account books includes entries after Warren's death, it may have been used also by his widow, or son Joseph W. Sawyer II.

PROCESSING NOTES

We created three groups in this collection: letter copy books, accounts books and loose papers. The first two groups are clearly Warren Sawyer's papers, when he broke away from Sawyer Bros. ship yard firm to start his own shipbuilding operation. However, loose papers found in one of the account books clearly belong to the Sawyer Bros.

Various vessels and shipmaster names are mentioned throughout the collection so to assist the researcher, we have created a cross-referenced index of these names directing the researcher to the correct page number.

ORGANIZATION OF SERIES

MS-430 WARREN SAWYER PAPERS

SERIES I. LETTER COPY BOOKS

Warren's Private Book 1892-1913

Warren Sawyer & Co. 1900-1913

SERIES II. ACCOUNT BOOKS

Dividends: 1898-1909

Dividends: 1910-1925

SERIES III. SAWYER BROTHERS

Vessel Papers

FINDING AIDS

MS430 WARREN SAWYER PAPER

SERIES I. LETTER COPY BOOKS

BOX FOLDER

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Warren's Private Book 1892-1913 |
| | 2 | Warren Sawyer & Co. 1900-1913 |

SERIES II. ACCOUNT BOOKS

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 3 | Dividends: 1898-1909 |
| 4 | Dividends: 1910-1925 |

SERIES III. SAWYER BROS.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 5 | Ownership of various vessels—dividends, n.d. 1925
Vessel statements |
| 6 | <i>Marjorie A. Spencer</i> (3M), statement, 1916 |
| 7 | <i>Grand Turk</i> (3M) Trip Statements #10-12, 30-36, 1920 |

MS-430: SAWYER BROTHERS

Ship builder in Milbridge, Maine

•

Book of Letters—Warren Sawyer & Co. — 1900-1913 Index of vessels

NAME OF VESSEL	PAGE NOS.
Alma (schooner)	209, 291, 487
Anna Pendleton (schooner)	25, 31
Annie M. Preble (schooner)	492
Auburndale (bark)	408, 417
Billow (schooner)	120
Clara J. (schooner)	209
D.P. (2M)	457
Edith and May (schooner)	298
Edna M. Champion (schooner)	227
Eliza J. Pendleton (schooner)	219
Ella Clifton (schooner)	19
Emily I. White (schooner)	362, 376-77, 408, 416
Etta	496
Eugenie (schooner)	287

Fannie D. (yacht)	498-99
Flora A. Kimball (schooner)	449
Frances C. Tunnell (4M)	174, 215, 219, 231, 259, 264, 277, 299, 206, 313, 336, 352, 380, 411, 428, 436
Granite State	4-6
Harry A. Berwind (schooner)	31
Hortensia (schooner)	22-23, 42, 63, 72, 76, 84, 97
Ida (schooner)	155, 303
Ina (schooner)	278, 280-82, 428
Iona Tunnell (schooner)	40, 47, 109, 195, 221, 223, 228-29, 305
Itasca [Itaska] (schooner)	178, 285
Joe (schooner)	112, 171, 174, 255, 284, 300, 314, 344
John Francis (schooner)	51, 64, 70
John Maxwell (schooner)	59, 61
Lucy May (schooner)	136
Metinic	350-51
Ninetta M. Porcella (schooner)	53-54, 173, 298, 424
Nokomis (schooner)	40, 42, 54, 66-67, 72, 76, 127, 173, 250, 260, 266, 279, 319, 321, 327, 334, 340
St. Croix (schooner)	411
Vineyard (schooner)	253
W. R. Perkins	424
William F. Campbell (schooner)	253
Winchester (schooner)	387, 395

MS-430: SAWYER BROTHERS
Ship builder in Milbridge, Maine

•
Book of Letters—Warren Sawyer & Co. — 1900-1913
Index of Shipmasters

NAME OF SHIPMASTER	PAGE NOS.
Arey, Capt. W. W.	462
Bryant, Capt. James G.	360-61
Cates, Capt. J. W.	167
Comvell, Capt. Jas. C.	258-59
Crabtree, Capt. Fred E.	41
Davis, Capt. C. A.	241, 249
Drisko, Capt. R. B.	226
Fickett, Capt. Z. M.	255,
Frost, Capt. Geo. W	276
Hall, Capt. A. B.	83
Hinkley, Capt. J. F.	134, 167, 270, 355
Husten, Capt. A. J.	44
Kelley, Capt. Edwin	291
Look, Capt. O. W.	194, 225, 227, 243, 248, 250-51, 298
Nash, Capt. F. S.	297

Peck, Capt.	41
Pendleton, C. D.	25
Plummer, Capt. V. C.	254
Sawyer, Capt E. A.	42, 68, 77, 319, 327
Smith, Capt. Jesse	210, 261,
Thompson, Capt. A. P.	35
Tracy, Capt.	40
Tunnell, Capt. Geo. A.	21, 34, 40, 84, 90, 97, 102-103, 156, 207, 231, 257, 264, 277, 299, 302, 305, 313, 332, 352, 377, 380, 411, 415, 423, 428, 448-49, 490
Wade, Capt. Geo.	187
Wallace, Capt. Ed.	102
Wallce, Capt. H.	274
Ware, Capt. Joseph	209
Williamson, Capt. J. T.	267, 296

MS-430: SAWYER BROTHERS
Ship builder in Milbridge, Maine

•
Book of Letters—Warren Sawyer & Co. — 1900-1913
Topic of Interest

SUBJECT	PAGE NOS.	PAGE NOS.
Construction	Specifications for Building a 4M schooner	242
Contract	Contract between Nelson Ingalls Jr and Warren Sawyer to build a 4M schooner.	47, 336
Diagram	Show property lines between Sawyer Bros., Warren Sawyer Wharf and G. A. Sawyer's Wharf	422
Diagram	Sawyer Bros. ship yard	495
Hon. Llewellyn Powers	Letter to Hon. Llewellyn Powers, candidate for Congress from district (Houlton, Me.)	48
Jonesport Bank	Offered position as bank director for new Jonesport Bank.	94
Estates	Handling the Mary A. Knowles Estate	338, 443, 446, 497
Millbridge School Houses	Insurance for two school houses	91
Seven-mast schooner	7 masts towed from Rockland to Milbridge	130, 134, 141
Purchase agreement	Purchase agreement for purchase of 4M schooner	295
Union Wharf	Letters to a Philander (who he identified as "brother") regarding payment for Union Wharf earnings, Addison, Maine. Handles Philander's father's estate.	212, 269, 288
United States Navy	Letter to Chief Constructor, USN regarding bid for four coal barges	262
Warren Saw Mill	His saw mill provide the bulk of his mill work for his shipbuilding business.	107

MS-430: SAWYER BROTHERS
Ship builder in Milbridge, Maine

•
Account Book — Dividends 1898-1909
Index of vessels

NAME OF VESSEL	PAGE NOS.
Alice Lord (3M built 1902)	120-122
Anna Pendleton (3M – built 1890)	32-33
Auburndale (Bark – built 1880)	74
Edith and May (Schr. - built 1887)	78-79
Edward H. Blake (3M – built 1890)	60-61
Eliza J. Pendleton (3M – built 1891)	82
Emma S. Lord (3M – built 1903)	17-20, 123
Flora A. Kimball (3M - built 1904)	94-99
Frances V. Sawyer (3M – built 1907)	6-7
Harry A. Berwind (4M – built 1895)	100-104
Hugh Kelly (3M - built 1892)	2-3
Iona Tunnell (4M – built 1899)	71, 75-78, 112-115
James T. Maxwell, Jr. (3M – built 1906)	54-55, 82, 105
Joe (Schr. – built 1889)	90-93
John Maxwell (3M – built 1899)	62-63, 106-111
Kate B. Ogden (3M – built 1883)	80
Laura (3M – 1879 built)	70, 116-119
Lejok (3M built - 1901)	34-36
Marjorie A. Spencer (3M – built 1905)	26-28
Mary L. Crosby (3M - built 1889)	40-42
Nelson E. Newbury (3M – built 1882)	50-53
Ninetta M. Porcella (3M – built 1900)	84-89
Nokomis (3M – built 1897)	10-16
S. G. Haskell (3M - built 1891)	64-68
Sawyer Brothers (3M – built 1906)	22-23, 44
Vidette (Schr. – built 1884)	24-25

MS-430: SAWYER BROTHERS
Ship builder in Milbridge, Maine

•

Account Book — Dividends 1910-1925
Index of vessels

NAME OF VESSELS	PAGE NOS.
Alice Lord (3M - built 1902)	42-45
Emma S. Lord (3M – built 1903)	53-58
Flora A. Kimball (3M - built 1904)	18-24
Frances V. Sawyer (3M – built 1907)	98-100
Grand Turk (3M – built 1916)	114-15
Herbert Loring (Schr. – built 1915)	64-67
Hugh Kelly (3M - built 1892)	6
Iona Tunnell (4M – built 1899)	104-106
James T. Maxwell, Jr. (3M – built 1906)	70-75
John Maxwell (3M – built 1899)	62-63
Lejok (3M built - 1901)	30
Marjorie A. Spencer (3M – built 1905)	86-91
Mary L. Crosby (3M - built 1889)	1
Melbourne P. Smith (Schr. – built 1909)	112-13
Ninetta M. Porcella (3M – built 1900)	80-83
R. B. White (3M - built 1912)	31
S. G. Haskell (3M - built 1891)	12
Sawyer Brothers (3M – built 1906)	92-97